

Eye-Opening Revelations of Modern Evangelism in America

Evangelism is a key tenet of the Christian faith, but how many of us really share our faith on a regular basis?

Jesus told us to “go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (Matt. 28:19) – baptizing, teaching and discipling through His power. If He is empowering us, what is our excuse?

The Body of Christ and Evangelism

In the modern American church we are seeing a huge drop in Christians sharing their faith anywhere and shockingly, according to a report that Barna put out in 2019, almost half of practicing Christian millennials say that evangelism is wrong. So not only is the younger generation of Christians not learning how to share their faith—but they are going a step further and discouraging evangelism.

For the body of Christ to grow and expand, we must be willing to open our mouths and share what Jesus has done for us and the good news of the gospel. From my personal experience sharing on the streets with these two ministries featured here—there are many people who have not ever heard about Jesus and the plan of salvation in our own neighborhoods.

I interviewed two evangelistic ministries located in the metroplex of Dallas-Fort Worth to find out what is really going on in the body of Christ related to evangelism and how we can be encouraged to break out of our comfort zones and love people through the sharing of Jesus everywhere we go.

Shawn Carlson is the executive director at Time to Revive (TTR). Founded by Kyle Lance Martin, TTR is equipping the saints for the return of Christ. They started out going city to city throughout the U.S., stirring up the church to come

together, to be equipped to share with people and then leading outreaches for a weekend or weeks at a time in that local region. Though they still have active ministries all over the nation, they have moved to an international focus all over the world through their product reviveSCHOOL, now in 85 countries that is discipling people on the totality of the Scriptures revealing the Messiah from Genesis to Revelation and empowering ordinary people to make disciples.

Wade Aaron is the founder of Christ's Reward. His ministry focuses on evangelism, church workshops, "by faith" mission trips, and provides online equipping materials and resources for believers to walk out their faith in a practical way.

This is one of two articles with their insights, and I challenge you to read their words and pray about how God might have you respond to Him. (Some of their answers were edited for the sake of time and conciseness).

The Gospel of Jesus Christ

Bunni Pounds: My question to both of these men of God—let's start at the beginning. What is the gospel of Jesus Christ? And how does it transform lives?

Shawn Carlson: The gospel is simply that we are children of God. We're created by God, but we're separated from this holy, perfect God, because of our sin. Sin cannot live in the presence of perfection, and so we have a serious problem. We must be reconciled to Him. He's grieved by the fact that we're not with Him, so He's created a way for us to be reconciled back to Him. Jesus became a sacrifice so that we could be free from our sins that separated us from Him, and that He could atone for them, and take care of them. When we believe and put our faith and trust in Jesus, then we get to enter back into that relationship with God because of what He did for us. And that results in eternal life, both here on Earth and forever in heaven.

Wade Aaron: I think this is great that you're asking this question. I was just at the University of North Texas sharing the gospel and this was the question I was asking the students that I encountered. Probably half of my encounters were with believers at the university. And I kept saying, "What is the gospel?" They would say that they believe in Jesus, but when I asked, "What is the gospel?" I got all kinds of answers. I would say to them, "the gospel at its simplicity is Jesus." Then I would ask them – "Why is He the gospel?" Then I would say, "because without Him, we'd be drowning in our sin." With Jesus, we are forgiven of our sins and the taking away of our sins is the greatest news ever.

Get your FREE CHARISMA NEWSLETTERS today! Stay up-to-date with current issues, Holy Spirit news, Christian teachings, Charisma videos & more!

This is what I believe, and I share it all the time. But this is only part of the gospel. The good news is that the only thing He asks us to do is put our faith in Him. He's not looking for us to be better people. He's not looking for us to do more. He's just looking for us to put our faith in Him and make Him the Lord of our lives. It's a really simple message. The gospel is amazingly simple. The forgiveness of sins, putting our faith in Him and surrendering to Him—this is the Good News. Jesus is the Good News. He's the hope for all.

The State of the American Church

Bunni Pounds: This is a huge question. Sharing our faith should be a basic tenet of Christianity, but we're not really seeing that much in the American church right now? How would you describe the state of the American church as it relates to sharing our faith right now?

Shawn Carlson: It's easy to be critical of the American church, I think, but a couple of years ago, somebody said something to me that caught my attention. They said, "remember

that we are talking about the bride of Christ.” We need to be careful about how hard we are on the church of Jesus Christ.

There is an intercessor in Rockwall, TX that said something profound to me, “You can’t correct on something you haven’t been trained on.” I just don’t think that the American church has been trained to share the gospel; it’s from the top down. And it’s not for lack of want or lack of trying; we just haven’t been trained. I got a guy that I run into at my local coffee shop. He’s attending a well-respected seminary in town and finishing up his degree and he’s putting off his evangelism class until the very end. Seminaries just don’t teach much about prayer or evangelism. If the pastors aren’t being taught evangelism, then the members in the seats aren’t going to be taught evangelism. The state of the American church rests on the fact that we just haven’t been trained. If we haven’t trained, we can’t correct anything.

Wade Aaron: I’ve had quite a diverse experience within the American church and specifically as it relates to evangelism. I would say overall, we’re dealing with a lot of churches that are pastoral, and no matter what denomination it is, I’ve seen there’s just a lack of emphasis on evangelism. I’ve studied different stats, but there’s no one cookie cutter stat. I think there’s a very lack of awareness and so many people are just trying strategies to bring people into their churches. A pastor I met the other day said to me, “what you’re doing is what Jesus said to do – go preach the gospel, heal the sick and cast out demons and then disciple them.” We want them to ultimately get into the church, but overall, I would describe the church as weak currently. In my terminology, we are weak, almost sick, and we need to be revived.

A Powerful Motivation to Stir Up the Body of Christ

Bunni Pounds: What motivates you every day to revive the church and operate in the gift of evangelist to stir up the Body of Christ? When you wake up each day, what do you think

about to keep moving? How do you answer the question – this is why I am doing what I am doing?

Shawn Carlson: This is probably a fleshly answer, but it's a thrill! When you talk to somebody, and they encounter the Lord in whatever way through the Word, maybe through just a demonstration of love and act of kindness, a verse or whatever it is, they encounter the Lord, and you can see their life change. It is a thrill. It's an adventure. That is not a great spiritual answer, but I believe it is the answer God wants me to give. It is what drives me. I enjoy seeing people experience God in that way.

Wade Aaron: I would say number one, I have a desire to be obedient to the Lord. Jesus said to go into all the world and preach the gospel and heal the sick. Before I was, what people would say – an evangelist, I just was trying to be obedient. And then I started realizing that part of my role is to equip the church. The thing that keeps me going is that there are people that are open to the gospel. They are waiting for someone to come talk to them about the Lord. One thing that keeps me motivated is the joy of salvation—seeing people respond to the gospel. But there is the need in the body of Christ for Christians to be equipped, and I want to try to help individual churches to help get their church community activated outside the four walls of the church. I can't just be the only one that teaches it, so I love going out and taking others with me to learn. Even if I don't have someone with me, it's now a part of my lifestyle. I carry a 12-foot cross into cities in America, and I love it.

Recycling Believers—A Transfer of Sheep

Bunni Pounds: How much priority is there on evangelism in the American church or how much are we just recycling believers from church to church? I haven't seen statistics on it, but I'm sure that a large amount of our church growth is recycled Christians. What have you seen?

Shawn Carlson: It's a very low percentage of people who are actually new church growth. Just think about how much church marketing attracts new people; we must have a social media presence, we must be community focused, do events, have a banner up, but the messaging is geared toward an audience who knows what the language is. That's where most of the training resources and discipleship resources go into – marketing of churches and that produces the transfer of sheep.

✖ We don't spend enough training our people how to go out into our communities, our neighborhoods, right around our churches, and just talk to people and share the gospel with them, teaching them about who Jesus is, and how their life can change by following Him and being plugged into a healthy church community or church body.

Wade Aaron: I would say most of the church overall is transfer of growth. We say, I don't like this church, so I'm going to go to this other church. There are some churches that are seeing growth because of new believers and going out, but they are a small percentage. I would say, overall, we're expecting people to come into the four walls of our church, have an encounter with God, or hear a message, come down to the altar and get saved.

To read the continuation of this discussion with Shawn and Wade—check back here at The Stream next week.

For the original article, visit [. This is part one of two-part article, stay tuned to for part two next week.](#) {eoa}

Join Charisma Magazine Online to follow everything the Holy Spirit is doing around the world!

Bunni Pounds is president and founder of *Christians Engaged*, a ministry activating the Body of Christ to pray, vote and engage regularly. Formerly a congressional candidate and 16-year political consultant, she is a motivational speaker and bible teacher. Her book, *Jesus and Politics: One Woman's Walk*

with God in a Mudslinging Profession *comes out nationally on*
2/6/24.